

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 ACDA-07
SSM-03 NEAE-00 /074 W
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O R 261505Z JUL 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4682
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3601

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV LE SY PLO
SUBJ: PALESTINIAN-SYRIAN-LEBANESE AGREEMENT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 3398, (B) BEIRUT 3542

1. SUMMARY: PALESTINIANS TOGETHER WITH SYRIANS AND LEBANESE HAVE AGREED TO PLAN TO "IMPLEMENT" CAIRO ACCORD AND ESTABLISH CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON. IMPLEMENTATION IS SUPPOSED TO START JULY 30 AND EVEN FORESEES USE OF ASF TO COLLECT ARMS BY FORCE. PUBLIC OPTIMISM IS BALANCED BY PRIVATE SKEPTICISMS. END SUMMARY.
2. FOUR-SIDED COMMITTEE WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF PLO, LEBANESE GOVERNMENT, SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, AND ASF LIAISON STAFF (LT. COL. SAMI KHATIB) MET AT CHTAURA JULY 25. COMMITTEE HAD BEEN FORMED PRECEDING WEEK AFTER PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP HAD INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY FAR-REACHING STEPS TO IMPLEMENT CAIRO ACCORD AND ESTABLISH CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON.
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3. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT END OF MEETING CONTAINS FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT POINTS:

- A. TWO DETAILED WORK PAPERS PREPARED BY SUB-COMMITTEES PROPOSING TIMETABLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO ACCORD WERE APPROVED;
- B. "LEGITIMATE LEBANESE FORCES AND THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES WILL

SUPERVISE THE IMPLEMENTATION IN ALL LEBANESE REGIONS, INCLUDING SOUTH LEBANON." (COMMENT: ONLY "LEGITIMATE LEBANESE FORCES" AVAILABLE FOR SUCH A TASK AT PRESENT TIME ARE IN THE BIQAA AND ARE MADE UP OF FORMER MEMBERS OF THE VANGUARDS. END COMMENT.)

C. IMPLEMENTATION WILL BEGIN SATURDAY JULY 30 WITH "ELIMINATION OF ALL ARMED MANIFESTATIONS, PROHIBITION OF ARMED PALESTINIANS OUTSIDE THE CAMPS, THE SURRENDER OF ALL ARMS WHICH ARE IN EXCESS OF THE ARMS PROVIDED FOR IN THE AGREEMENT, AND THE DETERMINATION OF THE POINTS AROUND THE CAMPS WHERE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES WILL BE STATIONED;"

D. ASF THEREAFTER WILL "RAID ALL ARMS DUMPS MAINTAINED IN VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN ANY PART OF LEBANESE TERRITORY." (COMMENT: THIS WOULD INCLUDE CHRISTIAN ARMS CACHES IN MT. LEBANON AREA. END COMMENT.)

E. THE COMMITTEE WILL MEET AGAIN TO CONSIDER PROGRESS MADE.

4. ACCORDING TO ENGLISH-LANGUAGE IKE, THE FOLLOWING FURTHER DETAILS WERE AGREED UPON, BUT NOT OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED:

A. HEAVY AND MEDIUM WEAPONS WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM PALESTINIAN CAMPS;

B. ASF WILL PROTECT CAMPS FROM EXTERNAL ATTACK, LATER TO BE REPLACED BY LEBANESE ARMED FORCES;

C. CAMPS WILL BE POLICED INSIDE BY PALESTINIANS ARMED WITH ONLY LIGHT WEAPONS;

D. PALESTINIANS MAY CALL ON ASF FOR ASSISTANCE IN DEFENDING
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CAMPS AS NEEDED;

E. "ARAB DETERRENT FORCES, WHEN CALLED, WILL ENTER THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS AND LEAVE THEM WHEN THEIR MISSION IS COMPLETED IN COOPERATION WITH THE PALESTINIAN ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND;"

F. NO PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS, EXCEPT THE PLO ITSELF, MAY HAVE OFFICES OUTSIDE OF THE CAMPS.

5. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ABU IYAD (FATAH NUMBER TWO) STATED THAT ALL REPEAT ALL PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS, "INCLUDING THE REJECTION FRONT", HAVE AGREED TO PLAN, AND YASSIR ARAFAT (STILL ABROAD) ON JULY 24 ALSO AGREED. ACCORDING TO ABU IYAD, PLAN WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN TWO PHASES. THE FIRST, LASTING FIFTEEN DAYS, WOULD CONSIST PRIMARILY IN ESTABLISHMENT OF A "PROTECTIVE CORDON" OF ASF TROOPS AROUND THE PALESTINIAN CAMPS. THE SECOND PHASE WOULD INVOLVE WITHDRAWALS OF "ARMED ELEMENTS" (PRESUBABLY INCLUDING CHRISTIAN MILITIAS) FROM SOUTH LEBANON AND THEIR REPLACEMENT WITH "REGULAR LEBANESE FORCES." (ACCORDING TO PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI, QUOTED IN L-ORIENT-LE JOUR JULY 25, THE PLAN WOULD CALL FOR THREE STAGES, THE FIRST IN THE BEIRUT AREA, THE SECOND IN OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY, THE THIRD IN SOUTH LEBANON.)

6. PALESTINIANS DO NOT INTEND TO DISARM THEMSELVES. Wafa reported that Abu Iyad himself, July 20, speaking to a group of Palestinian students, "declared that the most important part of this agreement is that which guarantees that the masses not be disarmed, and protects the right of the Palestinian revolution to preserve its military presence in South Lebanon."

7. COMMENT: Speaking to an embassy officer July 25, Pakradouni said he estimated chances of successful implementation of this agreement at about 20 percent. He also said Gol, including President Sarkis, was generally skeptical, but believed nothing would be lost by at least giving Palestinians a chance to show they mean business. As reported earlier, Lebanese suspect new Palestinian attitude may be an internal Palestinian maneuver and confidential

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That it depends for its effectiveness on outcome of the internal Palestinian struggle. Another unpredictable factor at this point is attitude of Christian militias, who are in position to torpedo plan in the south. President Sarkis, according to Pakradouni, believes that agreement at least tends to loosen up impasse on application of Cairo accord and situation in South Lebanon, and may generate momentum for future agreements, even if this one is unsuccessful. Prime Minister Hoss July 25 told the press that agreement appears "serious and encouraging."

8. Fonmin Boutros told ambassador July 26 that Palestinians appeared to mean what they said, but indicated we would have to see. Sun has come out from the clouds a little, but landscape is still obscure.
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